United Nations E/2011/85

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
5 May 2011

Original: English

Substantive session of 2011
Geneva, 4-29 July 2011
Item 4 of the provisional agenda*
The role of the United Nations system in implementing the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2010 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council

The role of the United Nations system in implementing the internationally agreed development goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The coordination segment will focus on the role of the United Nations system in promoting the implementation of the ministerial declaration adopted by the Economic and Social Council in 2010. The present report addresses ways in which the system can strengthen its capacity to ensure coordinated action, with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in the leadership role. It then reviews progress made by the United Nations system on the cross-cutting issues identified in the ministerial declaration. Recommendations on both aspects are included in the final section of the document.

* E/2011/100.

** The present report was prepared in close collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system.

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2008/29, the Economic and Social Council decided that its coordination segment should be devoted to the review of the implementation of the ministerial declaration adopted at the previous year's annual ministerial review. The main theme of the coordination segment in 2011 therefore focuses on implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

2. The adoption of the 2010 ministerial declaration coincided with the establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) by the General Assembly. In just one year, much has been accomplished to put in place the structures of UN-Women, define its priorities of work and address its relations with the entities of the United Nations system. The coordination segment of the Council agenda offers an opportunity to take stock of progress made in strengthening the coordinated approach of the United Nations system to gender equality and the empowerment of women. With UN-Women in the leadership role, it also provides an opportunity to assess how the new architecture contributes to promoting attention for gender issues across all areas, as called for in the ministerial declaration. It is this aspect which will be the focus of the first chapter of this report.

3. Adopted two months before the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, the ministerial declaration highlighted the strong linkages between gender equality and the empowerment of women to the broader development agenda. The declaration also broke new ground in that, for the first time, an intergovernmental body highlighted a number of cross-cutting issues, where action was expected to positively enhance the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women. The second chapter will therefore focus on how the United Nations system uses cross-cutting issues as leverage to accelerate progress and proceed in a coordinated manner.

4. The report does not cover all the activities carried out by the United Nations system in this field. An annual report on mainstreaming a gender perspective in all United Nations system activities is being submitted to the Council and will be considered under agenda item 7 (e). In order to avoid duplication, the present report will not focus on this dimension and should be seen in conjunction with the report mentioned above.

II. Strengthening the coordinated approach of the United Nations system to gender issues, with UN-Women in the leadership role

5. In its resolution 62/277, the General Assembly decided that continuing efforts on system-wide coherence should focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women as one of its four priority areas.[1] By identifying gender equality and the empowerment of women as a priority area for system-wide coherence, the General

[1] The other three priority areas were: the United Nations delivering as one at the country level with the related aspect of harmonization of business practices, funding and governance.

Assembly ushered in a period of intense consultation that led to the reform of the gender equality architecture of the United Nations and the establishment of UN-Women through the adoption of resolution 64/289.

6. Prior to the establishment of UN-Women, a number of gaps in and challenges to the existing architecture had been identified. These gaps included weak coordination between intergovernmental decision- and policymaking and implementation at country level; lack of a recognized driver with the authority and positioning to lead; lack of representation in high-level policy decision-making; lack of accountability, political will and support for gender equality, and inadequate system-wide standards; inadequate resources, both human and financial; inadequate country-level support to translate the gender analysis in Common Country Assessments/United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks into specific gender-related outcomes; and insufficient emphasis on country-driven demands and ownership.

7. Expectations are high that UN-Women will address these gaps and challenges in line with paragraph 52 of its founding resolution, which states that "the establishment of the Entity and the conduct of its work should lead to more effective coordination, coherence and gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system".

8. With a new organizational structure aimed at creating synergies between the normative and operational support functions, strengthened leadership and full representation on the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and its three pillars, UN-Women is positioned to lead the United Nations system in supporting the efforts of Member States to implement their commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women as called for in the ministerial declaration,

A. The vision and priorities of UN-Women

9. In accordance with its founding resolution, the work of UN-Women is grounded in internationally agreed norms, particularly those related to gender equality, including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[2] the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"[3] and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.[4]

10. The United Nations system has made great strides in recognizing gender equality as not just a women's issue, but a human rights issue and a development issue. Empowering women and girls is increasingly being understood as essential to the achievement of gender equality and a prerequisite for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals.

11. The work of UN-Women will centre around five core principles: providing demand-driven support to national partners to enhance implementation of international agreements and standards; supporting intergovernmental processes to

[2] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[3] Resolution S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.

[4] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

strengthen the global normative and policy framework on gender equality; advocating for gender equality and women's empowerment and championing the rights of women and girls — particularly those most excluded; leading and promoting coherence in the work of the United Nations system on gender equality; and acting as a broker of knowledge and experience, aligning practice with normative guidance.

12. Guided by these principles, UN-Women has sought the views of Member States, United Nations system partners, and civil society through wide consultation, and has prepared a strategic plan to be considered by the Executive Board in June 2011. UN-Women proposes to focus on five thematic priority areas in its operational activities. The rationale and vision for the work in each of these areas are addressed below.

1. Expanding women's voice, leadership and participation

13. UN-Women will work with partners to close the gaps in women's leadership and participation in all sectors and demonstrate the benefits of such leadership for society as a whole. Although considerable work has been undertaken to strengthen women's participation at the national and global levels, more remains to be done. Ensuring that women attain their rightful place in decision-making assures their self-determination and increases their investment in the achievement of broader economic, social and political goals.

2. Ending violence against women

14. The strategy of UN-Women will address all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls. It will support Member States in establishing the mechanisms necessary to formulate and enforce laws, policies and services that protect women and girls, promote the involvement of men and boys, and prevent violence.

3. Strengthening implementation of women's peace and security agenda

15. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by the perils of armed conflict, yet women are an untapped resource for contributing to conflict prevention and resolution. UN-Women will build on the momentum created by the tenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) in October 2010 to support a coordinated approach by the United Nations system to implement resolution 1325 and increase women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution. In this regard, UN-Women is leading the development of a strategic framework within the United Nations system, with associated targets and indicators. In addition, the Peacebuilding Support Office and UN-Women are currently planning a three-year programme on gender-responsive peacebuilding, which will address empowering women to engage effectively in national peace and reconstruction efforts.

4. Enhancing the economic empowerment of women

16. As emphasized in the ministerial declaration, the economic empowerment of women is particularly important in the context of the global economic and environmental crises. UN-Women will support coordination between partners within the United Nations system to ensure the full realization of women's economic

security and rights, including to productive assets and social protection, with a specific focus on rural women.

5. Making gender equality priorities central to national, local and sectoral planning, budgeting and statistics

17. Sustainable and meaningful change will not occur in the situation of women and girls unless adequate resources are allocated to that end at the country level. Working with United Nations country teams and other partners, UN-Women will support Member States, at their request, in adopting evidence-based planning and budgeting methods and building capacity to collect and analyse statistics, with a view to formulating and costing gender equality plans; ensuring gender-responsive budgeting; and supporting reporting and implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

B. Ensuring overall coordination, coherence and accountability

18. While UN-Women has identified the priorities mentioned above for its work together with its partners, collaboration with other parts of the United Nations system to deliver concrete and sustainable results remains essential. In this regard, UN-Women was tasked by the General Assembly to lead, coordinate and promote accountability on gender equality and women's empowerment in the United Nations system. Past experience has shown that coordination and coherence in gender equality work have been hindered by various factors, including weak linkages between intergovernmental agreements and implementation on the ground, and lack of channels to provide feedback from the national level on what works and what does not. UN-Women has prepared a coordination strategy with dedicated capacity to strengthen coordination, coherence, efficiency and accountability within the United Nations system. This capacity will also support the enhancement of partnerships with other relevant stakeholders, including civil society, to achieve gender equality goals, as set out in the ministerial declaration.

19. At the centre of the UN-Women coordination strategy is a commitment to work with the existing United Nations system coordination mechanisms and tools relevant to gender equality at all levels, streamlining and strengthening them where necessary, as well as establishing the missing linkages between them. Lessons learned and promising practices from existing coordination mechanisms, including the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the humanitarian coordination system supported by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Resident Coordinator system, and the "Delivering as one" initiative will further inform the way UN-Women executes its coordination mandate.

1. Coordination at the global level

20. At the global level UN-Women will work through CEB. Its three pillars, the High-level Committee on Programmes, the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group, provide important platforms through which UN-Women can promote coherence in policies directly relating to gender equality at global and country level, as well as ensuring that all United Nations system policies reflect the appropriate gender perspective. The senior level membership of UN-Women in all of these bodies now provides new opportunities to

establish stronger linkages between their decision-making, and the work of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. The Network brings together the focal points on gender from across the United Nations system to enhance coherence, share best practices and develop common approaches on issues central to gender equality and the empowerment of women. UN-Women will support the Network, and will continue to facilitate several of the inter-agency subgroups addressing key issues, including violence against women, women's peace and security and women's economic empowerment.

2. Coordination at the regional level

21. The United Nations regional commissions host the regional coordination mechanisms which bring together all the United Nations system entities working in that region. UN-Women will work through the regional coordination mechanisms to promote attention for the needs and priorities of women and girls within the context of the cluster system and gender clusters where they exist. The mechanisms will also be encouraged to feed their respective policy decisions, especially those on gender equality, to the Regional Directors' teams for follow-up at the country level.

3. Coordination at the country level

22. At the country level, UN-Women will work through the Resident Coordinator system and the United Nations country teams to promote and coordinate the work on gender equality, providing support to the gender working groups using guidance from the United Nations Development Group Gender Task Team.

4. Accountability

23. In addition to its role to lead and coordinate the work of the United Nations system on gender equality and the empowerment of women, the founding resolution called on UN-Women to promote accountability across the United Nations system for its performance in these areas. Effective results from gender mainstreaming require an institutionalized system-wide accountability mechanism on gender equality. While annual gender mainstreaming reports to the Economic and Social Council have indicated that some United Nations entities have incorporated gender equality into their respective accountability frameworks, institutional capacity for accountability for system-wide performance on gender mainstreaming remains inadequate. It is therefore critical to develop a system-wide accountability framework for gender mainstreaming. In 2006, CEB called on United Nations entities to develop and implement a system-wide strategy and action plan on gender mainstreaming, but this has not yet been undertaken.

24. UN-Women will work through the CEB mechanisms, the Resident Coordinator system and with the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality to develop an agreed system-wide accountability framework, and an action plan to make this operational, so that individual parts of the United Nations system, and the system as a whole, can hold themselves accountable for commitments made in terms of gender mainstreaming. Such a framework could reflect the kinds of tools each individual entity should be using (as many are already) to mainstream gender and monitor their own performance at the institutional level. Tools could include the use of a common "gender marker" to track resource allocation, like that already used by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations

Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee supported by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

25. The framework could also include the use of common indicators to measure the impact of United Nations support for gender equality at country level, as is already being done by gender working groups in 99 countries. The Resident Coordinator annual reports currently include information from these working groups, thus providing a sound basis for future analysis.

III. Closing the implementation gap in gender equality and empowerment of women in a coordinated manner

26. This chapter reviews progress made by the United Nations system in enhancing gender equality and the empowerment of women using the prism of the cross-cutting issues identified in the ministerial declaration. It is based on the contribution of United Nations system entities and highlights their individual and joint activities. A specific section on health has been added, given the important role played by United Nations system entities in this field and its high relevance for the achievement of all development goals.

A. Discriminatory attitudes and gender stereotypes, including in the education sector

27. The United Nations system is committed to promoting comprehensive and coherent approaches to ending discrimination against women. A major vehicle for this consists of the assistance provided to countries in addressing discriminatory attitudes and gender stereotypes in the education system. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UNICEF are leading these efforts in relation to literacy and basic education and UNESCO has engaged in a policy dialogue with African countries on this matter. Gender analysis of primary school textbooks has been carried out, and a pilot package of gender training modules for teachers will be developed shortly. A relevant example in this field is the education programme carried out by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), supported by UNESCO, through which local textbooks have been analysed and measures taken to ensure that UNRWA teachers use neutral language and avoid gender stereotypes.

28. Efforts are also being made to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed into educational policies, especially as regards technical and vocational education and higher education. A specific area of concern is the continuing lack of interest and opportunities for women and girls in ICT-related careers, which perpetuate stereotypical roles in society and are likely to lead to a shortfall in ICT professionals in the next 10-15 years. In collaboration with UN-Women, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has engaged in a process of sensitizing other United Nations agencies on this matter. In addition, ITU intends to establish an international "Girls in ICT day", whereby ICT companies, training institutions and universities will be called upon to organize an open day for girls.

29. Agencies have also developed specific tools, such as a module of the ITU "Connect a school, connect a community" online toolkit on how to develop community ICT centres to promote the empowerment of women. Similarly, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) promotes gender-sensitive education and skills acquisition for industrial development through the Entrepreneurship Curriculum Programme. Through this course, already delivered in 1,400 schools, girls are encouraged to venture into non-traditional entrepreneurial initiatives that challenge the stereotypes of society and develop a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship, business and self-employment. The recently established ITU-UNESCO Broadband Commission for Digital Development has also underscored the role of broadband in implementing Millennium Development Goal 3.

30. Advocating for women's human rights is an important vehicle for United Nations system efforts to address stereotypes and discrimination. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) presented a thematic study on discrimination against women[5] to the fifteenth session of the Human Rights Council in September 2010. A related plenary panel discussion was held around the potential establishment of a special mechanism of the Council on discriminatory laws and practices, resulting in the establishment on 4 October 2010 of a working group on discrimination against women in law and in practice.

31. Other United Nations system organizations, such as UNICEF, UNESCO, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and UNFPA, have used a rights-based approach to promote gender equality. For example, UNFPA has been advocating for the links between maternal mortality, gender equality and human rights and supports the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in drafting a general comment on the right to sexual and reproductive health. The reporting process of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is also a valuable opportunity for United Nations country teams to work together to support Governments in this exercise. Over the last five years, more than 50 country teams have provided coordinated support for preparation of reports on the Convention.

32. Although some communications activities, such as a UNESCO training programme for journalists, are carried out in this field by the United Nations system, the system would benefit from elaborating media strategies on discriminatory attitudes and gender stereotypes as a tool for outreach and better long-term impact.

B. Ending all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls across all sectors

33. Violence against women and girls is a pervasive problem that continues to affect all societies around the world, and such a complex problem demands a holistic solution. The United Nations system is called upon to develop a more coherent response, building on the efforts of the Secretary-General's campaign "UNiTE to End Violence against Women" and the complementary "Say NO — UNiTE to End Violence against Women" campaign. The UN-Women strategy will address all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls and will support Member States in this field. Development of national capacities is

[5] A/HRC/15/40.

undertaken via inter-agency mechanisms such as the Inter-agency Task Force on Violence against Women co-chaired by UN-Women and UNFPA.

34. A major challenge in addressing violence against women lies in developing multisectoral approaches. An interesting example where the United Nations system has developed such an approach is in connection with HIV/AIDS. UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNDP and UN-Women have undertaken joint activities, based on the recognition that violence can be both a cause and a consequence of HIV. The UNAIDS strategy aims to ensure that 50 per cent of high HIV-prevalence countries integrate HIV into the Secretary-General's UNiTE campaign and that at least 15 of them initiate a comprehensive set of actions to address and prevent violence against women. The joint initiative, United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, has been the driving force for the "Stop Rape Now" campaign.

35. In November 2010, UNDP convened a global meeting to advance the integration of initiatives to combat gender-based violence into national plans relating to HIV. At the regional and country level, United Nations joint teams have worked to include HIV in the UNiTE campaign and to undertake joint launches, focusing on issues relevant to the different regions, such as sex workers in Asia, violence in post-conflict countries in West and Central Africa and refugee camps in East Africa. This collaboration has been fruitful, yet it remains a challenge to integrate HIV into UNiTE campaign activities in many countries.

36. Similarly, efforts are being made to integrate responses to violence against women in poverty reduction strategies through economic costing and gender budgeting. This has become a key strategy for UNDP, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean. UNDP, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNFPA are working together to collect, use and analyse sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics, including developing culturally relevant statistical methodologies. At the field level, and as part of the "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence" campaign in November and December 2010,[6] UNRWA organized more than 100 events in Gaza, Jordan, Syria, and the West Bank, involving its health, education and relief and social services programmes.

37. A UNFPA-UNICEF joint programme on female genital mutilation/cutting has been established to contribute to the accelerated abandonment of these practices, in specific areas of implementation within 12 countries and globally, by 2012. Specific efforts are also being carried out to address sexual violence against adolescent girls. "Together for Girls" is an interesting multipartner initiative in this field, which brings together a wide range of United Nations and other organizations.

38. Since the adoption of the ministerial declaration, OHCHR has organized an expert workshop on the elimination of all forms of violence against women, in preparation of which a compilation of good practices in efforts to prevent violence against women was prepared. A summary of the outcome of this workshop will be presented to the seventeenth session of the Human Rights Council in June 2011. In addition, part of the annual full-day discussion of the Council on women's human rights will now be dedicated to the prevention of violence against women.

[6] The calendar and activities are available on http://16dayscwgl.rutgers.edu/campaign-calendar and http://www.saynotoviolence.org/user/751.

39. Joint system-wide efforts have been particularly visible in conflict and post-conflict settings, including through the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Among recent joint initiatives, it is worth mentioning the elaboration by OHCHR, in conjunction with UN-Women, of a guidance note on reparations for conflict-related sexual violence, which will clarify the roles and responsibilities of various actors in advancing programmes to benefit survivors of sexual violence.

40. Efforts have also been made to operationalize the team of experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1888 (2009). This team of experts is to be rapidly deployed to situations of particular concern with respect to sexual violence in armed conflict in order to assist national authorities to strengthen the rule of law.

41. As co-leader responsible for implementing paragraph 8 of resolution 1888 (2009) on women and peace and security, UNDP is strengthening its efforts to counter impunity for sexual violence and is building national capacity to uphold the rule of law. This includes enhancing the capacity of judicial officials and religious leaders to ensure women's access to justice, through both formal and informal processes.

42. An important country-specific mechanism is the high-level panel convened by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in August 2010 to address the needs of victims of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including remedies and reparations planned to be made available to them.

43. In all peacekeeping operations, the Department for Peacekeeping Operations/ Department of Field Support works in close collaboration with UN-Women, UNFPA and UNDP to prevent and protect women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence. Joint activities, such as assisting host countries to draft and adopt legislation related to sexual and gender-based violence, were carried out in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Timor-Leste, together with the development of national strategies to respond effectively to meet the needs of victims/survivors. Jointly coordinated capacity-building activities such as training, especially for the police and judicial staff, in the prevention, investigation and prosecution of sexual and gender-based violence are regular activities in the field. Peacekeeping missions, together with UN-Women, UNFPA, UNDP and OHCHR, have developed modules for better response to sexual and gender-based violence cases through setting up of one-stop centres for counselling, medical and legal support to victims/survivors of violence.

C. Measures to ensure the full empowerment of women, including equal participation of women and men in decision-making

44. The need to enhance women's roles as leaders and decision makers in all sectors is emphasized in the ministerial declaration. Much remains to be done in this field. Enhanced coordination within the United Nations system, with UN-Women as leader, is essential to harness the expertise of all of its components, as well as build on the partnerships that each has established. Progress in this area would support broader social change and help tackle discriminatory attitudes and gender stereotypes, and strengthen the potential of women as agents of change, opening a path for the empowerment of women across sectors.

45. UNDP has carried out activities to promote women's political participation, through support for electoral assistance, parliamentary support and strengthening constitutional reforms. UNDP also works with UN-Women and other partners to support the International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics, a leading knowledge portal designed to serve the needs of all actors interested in advancing women in politics.

46. OHCHR and ILO facilitate an enabling environment for inclusive employment, through positive employment programmes and supporting women's entrepreneurship. Such actions for the economic empowerment of women include gender-sensitive legal and institutional changes in compliance with human rights and ILO standards, greater recognition of the right to equal pay for equal work, elimination of barriers to access credit, training, technology and land, and legal guarantees of property and inheritance rights.

47. In this respect, FAO promotes gender equality in land tenure and access, both as information provider and in supporting countries to effectively integrate gender considerations in land tenure programmes. To that end, an international database on gender and land rights, including data on 24 different subjects for 78 countries has been developed. According to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), women have made significant strides towards achieving equality in intellectual property rights, both in terms of opportunities and of recognition. Special efforts are made to include women in WIPO training and educational programmes.

48. The agenda of UN-Women will be based on the principle that the economic empowerment of women is essential to combating poverty and promoting human security. In this regard, building on the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-fifth session, UN-Women will advocate for improving women's access to formal and non-formal education and training, particularly in science and technology, and will coordinate its efforts with other parts of the United Nations system towards enhancing women's access to full employment and decent work.

D. The critical role of men and boys

49. In the Plan of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,[7] the Beijing Platform for Action[8] and the agreed conclusions of the forty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (2004) the importance of male involvement for the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment was expressed. However, inter-agency efforts on the role of men and boys have not been extensive to date.

50. Through the Partners for Prevention Programme, UNDP, UNFPA, UN-Women and others have developed ways to work with men and boys in addressing gender-based violence in Asia and the Pacific. Good examples of UNDP support for the role of men and boys have been developed in several countries and regions, including

[7] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[8] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

Northern Sudan, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

51. Some United Nations entities have included this approach in their activities. UNICEF has developed internal guidance on the issue and held a side event at the 2010 session of the Commission on the Status of Women, looking specifically at the role of men and boys in gender equality. UNFPA also engages in ongoing global advocacy and mobilizes civil society organizations which are male-led or working on male engagement for gender equality.

52. The establishment of UN-Women is an opportunity to increase system-wide coordination in regard to the role of men and boys in the promotion of gender equality. The achievement of significant social, political or economic changes in a society will be impossible with the support of only half of the population.

E. The full integration of women into the formal economy

53. Given the economic development focus of several agencies, the United Nations system plays an active role in promoting the integration of women into the formal economy. Most activities are carried out by individual entities within their respective mandates. Joint initiatives will be further developed under the leadership of UN-Women, which is committed to promoting a "business case" for the economic empowerment of women.

54. UNDP has developed a number of tools to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals by making poverty reduction and economic policies benefit women and men, boys and girls equally. The Gender and Economic Policy Management Initiative is a regional initiative that addresses gender-related capacity constraints in economic policy formulation and implementation of macroplanning in Africa and Asia. During 2010, new policy tools were developed to address the gender implications of taxation, trade and employment guarantee schemes, and to examine the implications of the financial and economic crisis.

55. The collaboration on women's economic empowerment between the World Bank Group and the former United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, now UN-Women) resulted in the gender action plan entitled "Gender Equality as Smart Economics". Pilot interventions are being implemented designed to empower women economically, measure the key indicators of this empowerment, and most importantly, attribute the outcomes to the interventions. In addition, in 2010, the World Bank commissioned the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) to develop a women's economic opportunity index. The EIU produced its first report in July 2010.

56. United Nations agencies have made similar diagnostics, although in different economic sectors, as to the constraints faced by female-owned or operated enterprises as a result of discriminatory attitudes that inhibit them from maximizing their potential, joining business and employers' associations and integrating fully into the formal economy. Efforts are increasingly being made to provide responses to this state of affairs.

57. UNIDO promotes the development of female entrepreneurship, particularly in rural areas, through bottom-up growth strategies. One successful example of such activities is an ongoing project in the southern part of Mali aimed at building the

capacity of women's groups to produce shea butter and other products. Over 1,000 women have benefited from the transfer of knowledge and technology, to the extent that some women's groups were able to participate in an international cosmetic exhibition in Paris. A joint venture with a French cosmetics company has now been set up.

58. In 2010, the International Labour Conference decided that it would consider adopting a new international labour standard on decent work for domestic workers: a convention supplemented by a recommendation at the 2011 Conference. Domestic work has become one of the most important sources of labour for female migrant workers.

59. FAO and ILO promote and mainstream decent rural employment with a gender-sensitive approach. The Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools project strengthens the economic position of youth by facilitating the establishment of income-generating activities that can offer employment to young women.

60. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has taken active measures to close the implementation gap in gender equality in the maritime field. The International Maritime Law Institute now trains women to overcome attitudinal and environmental constraints and facilitate access to promotion. A number of IMO fellowships are also ring-fenced for female candidates.

61. WIPO increased its participation in and organization of meetings on women and intellectual property to contribute to improving public awareness of the importance of involving women in inventions and intellectual property rights. An assessment is under way to examine the gender sensitivity of tools used to support Member States in their national intellectual property strategies. It will also include recommendations to improve the collection of data disaggregated by sex across the spectrum of intellectual property activity.

62. On 11 March 2011, the World Tourism Organization and UN-Women launched the Global Report on Women in Tourism 2010, the first survey to map women's participation in the tourism sector worldwide. The report stresses that if tourism provides a wide range of income generation opportunities for women, they are often concentrated in low-skilled, low-paid and precarious jobs. It includes recommendations to close the gender gap, through gender-sensitive policies and integrating gender equality into corporate decisions.

63. The United Nations system is increasingly engaged in gender-related trade issues. Although the members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) have not yet decided on a specific mandate for addressing trade and gender issues, several practical steps and initiatives have been taken to integrate gender perspectives and thinking into WTO activities. The WTO secretariat is more and more engaged in gender-related trade issues, including through participation at senior management level in gender-oriented round tables. The participation of the secretariat in these events provides an enhanced level of visibility, while it is well understood that WTO rules and agreements are "neutral" in their language and focus.

64. As a joint agency of the United Nations and WTO, the International Trade Centre (ITC) is working to highlight the critical importance of gender mainstreaming in aid for trade as fundamental to effective resource allocation, and has showcased the role United Nations agencies can play in working with Member States on delivery. For example, in 2010, ITC partnered with WTO and organized an

expert round table on the gender dimension of aid for trade. The outcome of this meeting, which included experts from UNIFEM, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, was submitted to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and to the WTO Committee on Trade and Development, where members recommended that the third Global Aid for Trade Review, to take place in Geneva in July 2011, should include an increased focus on gender issues. Emphasis was also placed on the need to develop gender-sensitive indicators to track the use of aid for trade funds to ensure resources are available to close the implementation gap, as stressed in the ministerial declaration.

65. One area where the efforts of the United Nations system have been coordinated and have effected change has been through the Enhanced Integrated Framework. The Framework is a multi-donor programme helping the least developed countries play a more active role in the global trading system. The partner agencies of the Framework are the International Monetary Fund (IMF), ITC, UNCTAD, UNDP, the World Bank and WTO. Studies of trade diagnostics conducted under the Framework revealed too few references to gender issues in trade. This led to recommendations to change the Diagnostic Trade Integration Study template to adequately record where gender inequalities exist. A revised template was subsequently adopted and has been tested, yielding improved visibility of gender-based constraints in trade. ITC, at the request of the Framework secretariat, is developing training modules that explain the mainstreaming and targeted programming approaches that are expected to be rolled out in 2011-2012.

66. To effect change at the policymaking level, ITC has developed a gender-sensitive national export strategy methodology to assist countries to unleash women's trade potential. To help women's business organizations and associations connect members who are women business owners to global markets, ITC also leads an initiative that brings together corporations, Governments and organizations that have an interest in procuring from women vendors, with women vendors themselves. The Global Platform for Action on Sourcing from Women Vendors was adopted in Chongqing, China, in 2010 at the ITC World Export Development Forum. Platform membership is open and could operate as an entry point for beneficiaries of United Nations programmes that are export-ready, registered companies owned by women, to connect with potential buyers.

F. Measures to ensure that women and girls with disabilities are not subject to multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination

67. The attention paid by the United Nations system to women and girls with disabilities has increased since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. An Inter-Agency Support Group for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is in place, but further work is needed to ensure that United Nations entities implement specific activities targeted towards that group. The recognition by the Economic and Social Council of its cross-cutting nature calls for the coordinated involvement of various entities.

68. Some United Nations entities have clearly recognized the specificity of the situation of women and girls with disabilities. UNICEF has been promoting further consideration of the issue of "intersectionality" where women and girls experience

gender discrimination alongside other forms of discrimination, such as that against those of indigenous or minority status, or those living with a disability. UNICEF has recently recruited a new senior disability adviser who will be placing an emphasis on girls living with disabilities. Within the Inter-Agency Support Group, UNFPA has also advocated that joint United Nations documents include a special focus on the needs and rights of women and girls with disabilities. ILO promotes entrepreneurship training that provides disabled women with the means to develop confidence and forge a pathway out of poverty for themselves and their families in Africa.

69. OHCHR presented its third thematic study on the rights of persons with disabilities to the sixteenth session of the Human Rights Council in March 2011. The report highlighted the fact that men's and women's experience of disability is context-specific. In this regard, mainstreaming disability and addressing multiple forms of discrimination is important if internationally agreed development goals are to be met. In response, the Human Rights Council, in resolution 16/15, encouraged all actors to give appropriate attention to gender issues, including the connection between gender and disability, in international cooperation efforts.

G. The crucial role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women

70. The past year offered unprecedented opportunities for propelling the issue of rural women's economic empowerment high onto the international policy agenda and advancing the recognition of the role of rural women as agents of change and drivers of agriculture and food security. The ministerial declaration of the Economic and Social Council was an important step in this process. Consensus around these issues was translated into policy commitments in the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals,[9] which recognizes rural women's contributions to agriculture and food security and the need for greater action to support their empowerment. In 2012, the Commission on the Status of Women will focus on the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges as its priority theme, and is expected to further advance the global policy agenda on this topic.

71. Joint activities undertaken by FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP), including joint activities in the field of research, capacity development and advocacy, have contributed to this consensus-building.

72. A major recent endeavour was the FAO report "The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-2011",[10] which focuses on women in agriculture and makes a case for the crucial role that women play in the overall success of agriculture and food security. According to the report, closing the gender gap in agriculture would lead to a 2.5 to 4 per cent increase in agricultural productivity at the national level and reduce the number of undernourished people in the world by between 12 and 17 per

[9] See resolution 65/1.

[10] Available at http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050e/i2050e00.htm.

cent, or 100-150 million people. The report critically evaluates experiences from several countries and offers policy measures.

73. A groundbreaking study by IFAD, FAO and ILO, released in January 2011 is the first comprehensive look at gender and work in rural areas since the start of the recent global economic crisis. The joint study entitled "Gender dimensions of agricultural and rural employment: differentiated pathways out of poverty — status, trends and gaps"[11] examines important but rarely addressed questions regarding the different tasks carried out by rural women and men, the livelihood challenges they face, and the policy responses needed to strengthen their role in rural development. The cornerstone of the analysis in the report is the United Nations Decent Work Agenda. The agencies also launched a set of seven new action-oriented policy briefs for practitioners and policymakers on key aspects of rural employment and decent work.

74. IFAD has given increased attention to gender relations — and power relations — at the household level. A new form of gender equality approach in agriculture and small-scale enterprises has focused on strengthening the complementarity of family-based production: helping husbands and wives become involved in improving agricultural production, thereby increasing productivity. The household approach has been especially powerful for quality improvements in agricultural value chains, where women are often traditionally responsible for post-harvest processing. When the improved productivity generates significant profits, it contributes to decreasing men's seasonal or permanent off-farm migration, thereby improving community viability.

75. Agencies have developed new tools to improve knowledge and policy options for rural women. Examples of these are:

(a) The FAO Agri-Gender Statistics Toolkit, a database for the collection and use of sex-disaggregated agricultural data, which enables individuals and organizations to determine what gender-sensitive agricultural data they require and how to collect and analyse them (http://www.fao.org/gender/agrigender/en);

(b) The FAO DIMITRA project "Rural women and development: networking and partnerships' skills strengthening in information management", operational in Africa, is a tool that enables rural women, through their associations and grass-roots organizations, to make their voices heard and to increase access to information;

(c) The gender-responsive agricultural development and enterprise community of practice, formed in 2010 and made up of individuals from diverse organizations, spearheaded by IFAD, the World Bank and WOCAN (Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management);

(d) The Network of Women Ministers and Leaders in Agriculture, which was engaged in supporting rural women's participation in Economic and Social Council events last year, including a high-level event as part of the 2010 annual ministerial review. Following this, the Network prepared a two-year strategic plan to strengthen rural women's leadership and participation in decision-making processes.

76. In 2010, a groundbreaking UNDP thematic guidebook entitled "Gender, Climate Change and Community-Based Adaptation" examined the factors which

[11] Available at http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i1638e/i1638e.pdf.

exacerbate the impact of climate change on rural women and provided advice on how to mainstream gender into adaptation and mitigation initiatives at the community level.

77. With regard to indigenous women, in August 2010, FAO adopted a corporate policy on indigenous and tribal peoples, which was prepared through a collaborative effort involving indigenous representatives, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and other United Nations agencies. The policy promotes indigenous women's economic and social empowerment through its gender equality principle. UNDP increasingly works to promote indigenous women's political participation in democratic governance, particularly in Latin America.

78. UNESCO has promoted women's empowerment in the area of culture through discussions on an upcoming report on gender equality and culture, and on the development of a future UNESCO policy on engaging with indigenous peoples. UNFPA has also increased its work in this regard and in supporting access to quality health services for indigenous and ethnic minority women.

79. Based on the recognition of the important role played by women in biodiversity management and conservation of traditional knowledge, which are important sources of medicine and health care, WIPO has increased consultations with indigenous women's groups to determine the intellectual property needs and expectations of holders of traditional knowledge.[12]

H. The need to accelerate progress on women's health

80. The United Nations system is involved in a number of critical international partnerships (H4+, IHP+, H8, Harmonization for Health in Africa) that have been identified as both strategic and critical in taking forward and scaling up efforts in support of women's health, tackling weak health systems and fragmented donor processes.

81. A major step forward has been the launching of the Secretary-General's Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health at the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals in September 2010, which aims to support national plans and strategies relating to health issues, including improving women's health through integrated programmes for reduction of maternal and child mortality.

82. Within the United Nations system, UNFPA plays a key role in this field. Its Global Programme to Enhance Reproductive Health Commodity Security and the Maternal Health Thematic Fund directly contribute to this purpose. The global Midwifery Programme, launched by UNFPA, and the International Confederation of Midwives have both helped address the acute shortage of human resources for maternal health.

83. Other agencies have taken interesting initiatives in this field. For example, in collaboration with WHO, on 26 January 2011 ITU launched the Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health. The objective is to lead a process to propose a framework for global reporting, oversight and accountability on women's and children's health. Such a framework will help

[12] For example, see http://www.wipo.int/women-and-ip/en/programs/tk.htm.

countries to monitor where resources go and how they are spent, providing the evidence needed to show which programmes are the most effective in saving the lives of women and children.

84. OHCHR has been mandated by the Human Rights Council to prepare a second analytical compilation on good and effective practices to prevent maternal mortality and morbidity by September 2011. OHCHR has invited various stakeholders to provide input to this process.

85. The gender equality component of the UNAIDS strategy is operationalized through the UNAIDS Agenda for Accelerated Country Action for Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV, which was launched in 2010. Implementation progress is reported to the UNAIDS Board on a regular basis and represents a unique process of joint United Nations, civil society and Member State collaboration, and reporting on results achieved. Since its launch, over 56 United Nations joint teams have facilitated the roll-out of the UNAIDS Agenda, with the objective that by 2015, half of the responses on HIV are centred on gender equality and women's empowerment.

86. UNAIDS is increasingly taking AIDS out of isolation, to make HIV responses work for wider health and development goals and promote the achievement of Millennium Development Goals 3, 4, and 5. In 2010, UNAIDS joined the Health 4+ partnership[13] of organizations. WHO has also taken practical steps to address the feminization of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, including by working on a gendered approach to the vulnerabilities of sex workers and female injecting drug users.

87. In 2010, ILO recommendation No. 200 concerning HIV/AIDS and the world of work was adopted. The recommendation calls for a wide range of measures to be taken in or through workplaces to reduce transmission of HIV and alleviate its impact. UNDP has engaged networks of women living with HIV/AIDS from 14 countries in Millennium Development Goals review processes.

88. As non-communicable diseases — mainly cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes — are among the leading cause of death for women in high- and middle-income countries, WHO has developed a number of tools to tackle these issues, such as the MPower package of six cost-effective policy interventions related to tobacco control, diet and physical activity, alcohol abuse and preventive measures. A high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases will be held on 19-20 September 2011, in New York. Building on the commitment of Heads of State and Government to scale up action in this field, the United Nations system will be expected to ensure that the response to non-communicable diseases among women is placed at the forefront of efforts to close the implementation gap.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

89. This report testifies to the positive momentum within the United Nations system to promote a more robust and better coordinated agenda for gender equality and the empowerment of women. More efforts are under way in different sectors to reduce the implementation gap, as called for in the Economic and Social Council ministerial declaration. The creation of UN-Women is an opportunity for the whole

[13] UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, the World Bank and UNAIDS.

system to scale up its efforts and increase the visibility of these issues. In this regard, the Council may wish to stress the following elements:

(a) The establishment of UN-Women is both a much-needed enhancement of the capacity of the United Nations system to champion gender equality and the empowerment of women and a pioneering effort by a United Nations entity that supports both global normative processes and operational activities at country level;

(b) UN-Women, as a composite entity, represents a new way of doing business in the United Nations and therefore requires innovative and flexible means of support, including financial support, by different stakeholders;

(c) The commitment of UN-Women to work with the United Nations system through existing coordination mechanisms will contribute to promoting system-wide coherence;

(d) As called for by CEB, UN-Women has an important role to play in developing an action plan for an operational accountability framework for the United Nations system, including in its efforts at country level, through the Resident Coordinator system and country teams.

90. In this context, it is important that all relevant actors focus on key lessons learned and good practices, in order to achieve concrete progress for women and girls in line with implementation of the ministerial declaration of 2010. Summarized below are some areas for further work to be undertaken by the relevant United Nations body as appropriate, with the support of Governments and other stakeholders, such as civil society and the private sector. Institutional steps to be taken by the United Nations system in this endeavour are contained in the report on gender mainstreaming also submitted to the Council.

(a) Gender equality is not only a goal in its own right, but an essential means for achieving all the Millennium Development Goals. Making poverty reduction strategies and economic policies benefit women and men equally will accelerate progress towards the Goals. This requires the full and equal participation of women in all political and economic decision-making processes;

(b) Priority should be given to better linking girls' and women's educational gains with employment opportunities, including in new and non-traditional fields, by expanding the scope of education opportunities; supporting women's business, trade, ICT and entrepreneurial skills; providing access to job search support services; providing social protection; and promoting reconciliation of work and family responsibilities for women and men;

(c) Urgent action is needed to implement a systematic and comprehensive approach aimed at eliminating all forms of violence against women, including in humanitarian settings. Such action should include an increased focus on prevention, and training of public officials, in particular law enforcement officials and health service providers, to effectively support victims/survivors, and to address the link between HIV/AIDS and violence against women;

(d) More proactive measures are needed to put an end to discriminatory practices and gender stereotypes which perpetuate unequal power relations between men and women, resulting in unequal sharing of responsibilities and inequalities in access to resources and decision-making, and limiting both women and men in achieving their full potential;

(e) A stronger engagement of men and boys is indispensable for gender equality and the empowerment of women; special efforts are needed to mobilize civil society organizations working on male engagement for gender equality;

(f) Efforts to promote decent work for rural women are urgently needed in areas such as access to productive resources, credit and technology;

(g) Increased investment in gender equality and the empowerment of women should be included in all responses to the financial crisis, including recovery and stimulus packages. Appropriate mechanisms should be in place to ensure that domestic and international resources and support reach women. Responses to rising and volatile food prices need to consistently integrate a gender perspective so as to prevent a disproportionate impact on women;

(h) Collection of data and analysis of multiple factors of discrimination are needed to ensure that public policies can be effectively targeted to reach marginalized populations of women, including older women, migrant women, indigenous women and women with disabilities;

(i) Increased investment in well-functioning health systems and empowering women and communities to access them, including through scaling up of maternal mortality reduction strategies and strengthening family planning programmes is key for achieving a number of the Millennium Development Goals;

(j) There is a need to promote increased attention to the gender dimension in responses to non-communicable diseases.